

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

did not fit well with the activities of the Tudeh, whose policy in this respect was vacillating. Sometimes the Tudeh openly attacked the mullahs.<sup>3</sup> On other occasions, however, the party made attempts to approach the Shiite hierarchy in a friendly manner and to proclaim its positive attitude toward religion. It is not improbable that the Communists managed to win over a few individuals, but there is no evidence that they made any headway with the bulk of the clergy. On the contrary, the Shia divines were the first to see through Soviet and Communist tactics and were the most persistent and uncompromising in their opposition to Communist influence. Mullah Qumi from Najef and Karbela made it quite clear upon his arrival in Teheran that he disapproved of the Tudeh because its activity was contrary to Islam.<sup>4</sup> The nationalist papers, especially those affiliated with the party of Seyyid Zia ed-Din, frequently took issue with the Tudeh on account of its antireligious stand.<sup>5</sup>

## SEYYID ZIA ED-DIN

Considering the hold that the clergy had on the Iranian masses, their anti-Communist attitude was an important element in the political game. If all Iranians had shared the religious devotion of the peasantry, ideologically the opposition of the clergy alone would have been sufficient to present the Russians with a truly united front. But this was not the case. Many Western-trained individuals had become skeptical in matters of religion, and some indifference prevailed among city dwellers. If Communist propaganda was to be met with effective countermeasures, a definitely anti-Communist political party was needed. Between 1941 and 1943 no such party existed,

and the burden of opposing Communism fell upon the shoulders of the elements previously mentioned. But in 1943 the gap was filled. In September of that year former Premier Seyyid Zia ed-Din returned from exile and began to rally around himself anti-Communist elements. ^VTien the news of his impending return spread in Teheran, some papers greeted him with effusion. *Setareh*, for example, a daily reputed later to be close to Dr. Millspaugh, wrote an article entitled,

a *Rahbar*, Nov. 29, 1944.

4 *Tehran-i-Mossauar*, Sept. 9, 1943.

s A typical article in *Ra'd-i-Emruz*, March 12, 1944.